

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of managing a free-space optical network includes monitoring environmental and weather conditions in the vicinity of one or more free-space optical links in the network. Data is gathered by

- 5 environmental condition instruments, such as visibility meters, and is used to assess whether atmospheric conditions have deteriorated to the point where operation of one or more free-space links might be in jeopardy. If data from an environmental condition instrument falls below a predetermined level, network data traffic is routed over an alternate communication path, which
- 10 may include radio frequency (RF) paths, fiber optic cables, wire cables, or other free-space links.